LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

Nottingham City of Football:

Stakeholder Interviews – December 2016

Prepared by Leeds Beckett University

Reader Information

This report was prepared by Stephen Zwolinsky and Professor Jim McKenna.

Report Reference:

Zwolinsky, S. and McKenna, J. (2016). ***Nottingham City of Football: Stakeholder Interviews, December 2016.*** Centre for Active Lifestyles, Leeds Beckett University.

Contact Details:

Stephen Zwolinsky,

102 Fairfax Hall,

Leeds Beckett University,

Headingley Campus,

Leeds,

LS6 3QS

Phone: 0113 812 9107

Email: S.Zwolinsky@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Contents

Figures:

Executive Summary

Understanding the barriers and enablers to effective intervention implementation is critical for interpreting the findings (1). Even when an intervention is relatively simple, its interaction within a system can be highly complex. Nottingham 'City of Football' (NCoF) is significantly influenced by its design and implementation (2). Therefore, understanding how it works in practice is vital to building the evidence base around how it can be replicated and the outcomes reproduced – or improved.

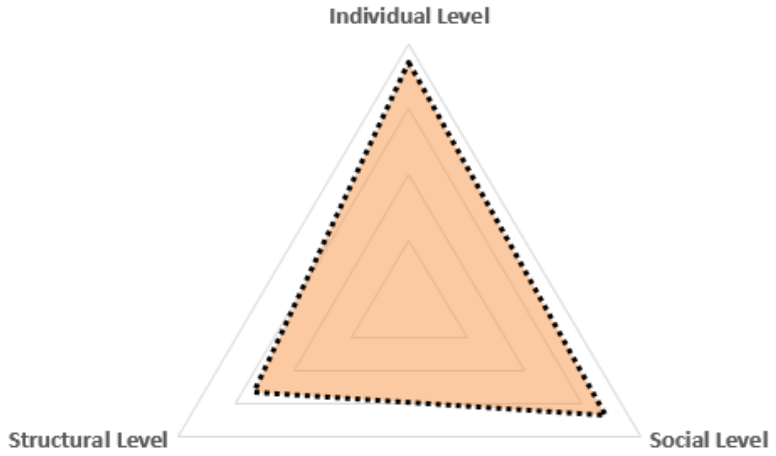
INTRODUCTION: This mid-programme report is designed to provide an overview of the stakeholder's experiences of programme delivery through 'Nottingham City of Football' (NCoF). To be effective with 'new' audiences, interventions need to be planned to address the multiple barriers non-engagers may experience in attempting to become involved. Typically these barriers revolve around motivation and competencies in three domains; individual, social and structural (giving a 2 x 3 framework). NCoF is attempting to engage more people, especially inactive young people and girls, into football-related activity and it makes sense that this interim evaluation addresses progress to-date around this framework.

METHOD: A series of interviews were undertaken with 21 key stakeholders that centred on how to improve programme delivery. The interviews were orientated around a brief 12-item survey that assessed stakeholder perspectives on motivation and competencies across the three domains, each scored 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Items were worded positively meaning that high scores indicate strong coverage of this theme. Interview analysis was underpinned by a thematic analysis of this framework, while the survey responses were analysed to provide composite scores for each stakeholder across each domain.

RESULTS: The results from the stakeholder's accounts of their experiences of NCoF were mapped across the framework. *Individual Level* – From an individual level, the stakeholders reported high levels of both motivation and competence for delivering on the NCoF objectives. This spirit was driven by the sense of having the right people (i.e., coaches and stakeholders), properly trained to excite young inactive people, including girls, into football. The feeling was that if we can get them, we can keep them. Regarding management of the *Social Level issues,* there was strong confidence, but limited application of social support mechanisms that were operationalised to encourage initial attendance and subsequent

adherence within NCoF. Finally, confidence around the *System level* issues was lowest of all three domains. There stakeholders reported that essential ways-of-working hadn't been adequately adapted to increase the chances of making NCoF successful in recruiting and retaining people who were not previously involved in football. Figure 1 shows a radar plot of the stakeholder's composite scores for each domain collected from the brief survey administered during the interviews. For optimal programme delivery, the shaded area should extend to the edge of the triangle for each domain. It is clear that the system level shows the largest potential area for improvement.

Figure 1: Areas of Influence – What can be Improved?



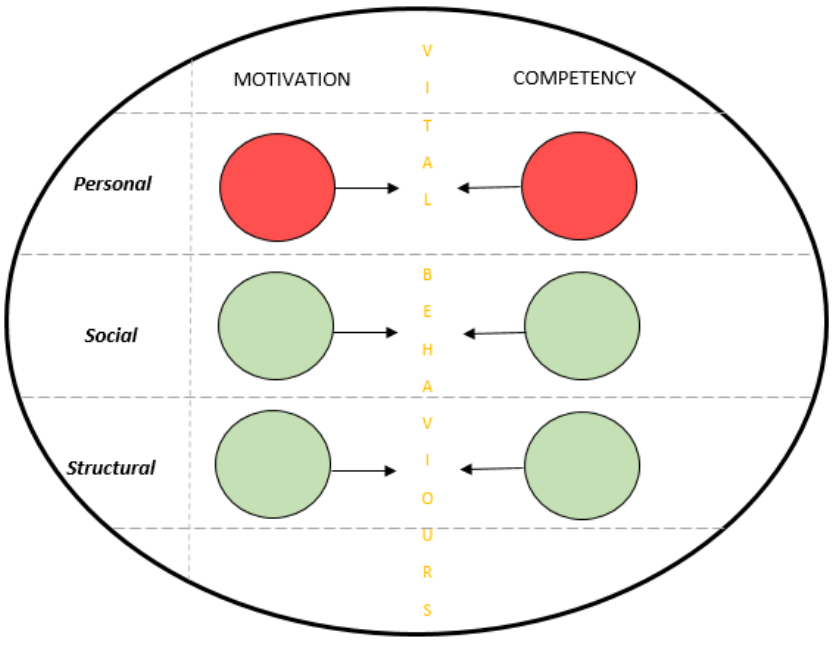
SUMMARY: Based on the interviews and evidence from the survey, the stakeholder's perspective is that on an Individual level, NCoF have the right staff and individuals in place who have been trained to do the right things. They were highly motivated about enhancing the NCoF experience and reported having the necessary competencies to improve practice. On a Social level, the stakeholders were less persuaded that they had the right social organisation and that the programme lacked the momentum to create new social norms across the city. From a Structural level, the stakeholder's accounts suggested that the system had yet to capitalise on what NCoF is trying to do. There was no robust system for rewarding the right behaviours nor for creating accountability among deliverers or their organisational affiliates. Further, while there was evidence that involvement with NCoF has caused organisations to change how they operate with new client groups, it had not had a significant impact. Stakeholders recognised the problems within the system, but they were less confident about how to make it better. This 2 x 3 framework can help to offer perspectives that provide a more complete view of NCoF.

1: Introduction

An interventions effect can be significantly influenced by its design and its implementation (2). Understanding how an intervention works in practice is vital to building a valuable evidence base. Process evaluations, such as this, can provide information about how an intervention might be replicated and the outcomes reproduced. This approach can be used to assess fidelity to the programme and the quality of its implementation, i.e. not just what was delivered but how. Moreover, it can clarify the causal mechanisms and identify the contextual factors associated with variations in outcomes (1). Understanding the barriers and enablers to effective implementation is critical for interpreting the findings. Even when an intervention is relatively simple, its interaction within a system can be highly complex.

Effective interventions need to build and support a system that develops positive emotions and resilient stakeholders. In essence, behaviour has three layers of influence, (i) Personal, (ii) Social and (iii) Structural. We can influence behaviour by changing motivation and competency across these structural aspects - leaving six areas of influence. The key here is to clarify measurable results, find preferred approaches, and analyse the six sources of influence. Most change efforts are unsuccessful because they don't focus on the vital behaviours or identify crucial moments when the right choices matter. Moreover, while each area of influence is important one shouldn't be championed at the expense of another.

Figure 2: The Six Sources of Influence



2: Methodology

This section summarises the methodology employed for this piece of work and sits within the overall programme evaluation. NCoF aims to increase football participation among groups that don't traditionally engage in new and interesting ways. The program seeks to make engaging with football a normative behaviour across the city, especially with inactive children and specifically girls. This piece of work aims to answer the following research questions from a group of key stakeholders:

1. *What are the preferred approaches for the effective delivery of a 'football' based intervention for groups that don't traditionally engage with 'football'?*
2. *How does this translate across the six sources of behavioural influence?*

Data Capture: Stakeholders were invited by NCoF to engage in the research over two days in December 2016. Prior to the research, participants were required to read an information sheet and provide informed consent to engage in the interview process. Data were captured through two methods (i) semi-structured interviews and (ii) a brief survey about NCoF. Following ethical clearance, N=21 (n=9 females and 12 males) stakeholder interviews were completed. These stakeholders came from 19 different organisations and included n=17 partners and n=4 deliverers. These included sporting organisations like the county FA, Nottingham Forest, Nott's County. There was also representation from the local authority, media outlets and other key partners. Interviews lasted between 25-45 minutes and were digitally recorded.

Data Analysis: To help address the research questions, a theoretical thematic analysis was completed on the interviews and framed around the 2 x 3 framework. The brief 12-item survey assessed stakeholder perspectives on motivation and competencies across the three domains, each scored 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Items were worded positively meaning that high scores indicate strong coverage of this theme. Survey data were cleaned and inputted into the statistical software package SPSS (v21) for analysis. Percentages were calculated from the total number of valid answers given for a question. In addition to generating descriptive statistics, inferential analyses were conducted (where appropriate) to explore the relationship between variables of interest.

3: Results

3.i –INDIVIDUAL LEVEL 1: Enhancing The Experience

Based on the survey data, participants reported an average score of 9.5/10 for this area. This was the highest score recorded for the six areas of influence. It was abundantly clear that all the stakeholders interviewed were wilfully connected to the program and had high levels of personal motivation towards seeing NCoF succeed and improve outcomes among groups that were unreached through traditional avenues.

This area of influence was underpinned by a personal drive to achieve and improve the desired outcomes for the target audience. There was a noticeable optimism to keep going and act on opportunities to achieve the organisational goals.

Preferred Approaches:

The following preferred approaches were unpicked based on the interviews with the stakeholders for influencing change around enhancing the experience.

- *Telling Meaningful Stories* –

Part of telling a meaningful story is having a clear message. Stakeholders reported that is was vital to develop a crystal clear message about what the offer is and who it is for so that it did not and could not become confused. The consensus was that if the story or message was unclear, it may actually lower motivation and not give *'permission'* for stakeholders or participants to engage. It was considered vital that the NCoF story challenged any grassroots assumptions about what football is within this context.

- *Create a Direct Experience* –

Stakeholders reported that creating a direct experience for themselves and participants was key to enhancing the experience. The stakeholders clarified that this direct experience was needed to biuld and maintain monmentum, so that they and/or the participants felt connected and invested in the programme. For the stakeholders, regular group meetings, updates and feedback on progress were thought to be valuable tools for creating a direct experience.

3.ii – INDIVIDUAL LEVEL 2 - Improving Your Practice:

Based on the survey data, participants reported an average score of 9.05/10 within this area. This was the second highest score recorded for the six areas of influence. On the whole, stakeholders felt that they had the ability to provide an appropriate offer and that the offer was pitched at a level that participants had the ability to engage with. Having highly skilled stakeholders in place was central to the idea of improving your practice to help ensure that no group (stakeholders or participants) felt like they were being asked to do something they could not do.

Preferred Approaches:

To help improve practice, the stakeholders suggested the following preferred approaches during the interviews.

- *Demanding Deliberate Practice* –

The interviews signalled the need for deliberate practice, structured activities with the specific goal of improving performance. To help achieve this, practice and actions need to be matched to current skill levels, combined with immediate feedback and be repetitious. In this context, deliberate practice is about exploring how consistently and deliberately the stakeholders can work to improve their/participants personal ability and surpass their *'limits'*.

- *Planning For Meeting Resistance* –

Many stakeholders reported experiencing resistance to the programme from groups external to NCoF, other stakeholders and intended participants. Planning for this resistance was something that was considered important and could be achieved by understanding the resistance and its root cause, then acting and or communicating to address it. From then on, paying attention to the need to continue to act and developing mechanisms to continually engage the broader population were seen as important strategies for countering resistance.

- *Managing Emotions* –

This was considered necessary for both stakeholders and participants. Being required to surpass your limits is likely to elicit strong emotions that will often require careful management. This was an area than many stakeholders thought could be improved.

3.iii – SOCIAL LEVEL 1 - Creating A Movement:

Based on the survey data, participants reported an average score of 8.1/10 for creating a movement. This score was considerably lower than either area of influence on the personal level. In general, the stakeholders agreed that NCoF changed participant's opinions about football and promoted social interaction. However, it was felt that it fell short of creating new social norms and perhaps had not done enough to change the target audience's perspectives about what NCoF is and why it is for them as a whole.

Preferred Approaches:

The following preferred approaches were unpicked from the interviews with the stakeholders for creating a movement.

- *Create New Norms & Harness Momentum* –

One of NCoF's aims is to create a social norm about participating in football among groups that don't typically participate, and motivating that audience to do so. One of the reasons this was not optimised was linked to issues around the clarity of the message and a lack of sustained momentum. For example, the stakeholders reported that once NCoF won the funding there was a large media announcement which generated significant public interest. However, there was a significant time gap from this point to any sustained public engagement and formal delivery getting under way. This gap was reported to have contributed to a distortion in the NCoF message among the general public. Moreover it was thought to have halted the momentum required to keep the message about new ways to engage with football out there.

- *Engage Leaders & Local Experts* –

The stakeholders highlighted the importance of doing more to utilise people within Nottingham who have the power to motivate, and getting the support of those that enable things to happen. These local experts were seen as opinion leaders and key contacts for many of the communities NCoF wanted to work within. Moreover, many stakeholders reported the value of having people round the table who were not the 'usual suspects' within the local football community and not going down 'well-trodden paths' in terms of practice and what can or cannot be done.

3.iv – SOCIAL LEVEL 2 - Enhancing Social Capital:

Based on the survey data, participants reported an average score of 8.85/10 for this area. Social influences in the form of social support and prompting typically have strong positive associations with increased engagement. The presence and interest of other people can provide reinforcement and keeps the desired behaviour prominent. Changing a behaviour – i.e. engaging with NCoF – was difficult for some stakeholders and participants, for these individuals especially, maintaining strong social support networks was essential (3). Moreover, it is important to remember that behaviour is not independent of the context in which it occurs, participants were also influenced by their social environments (4).

Preferred Approaches:

The following preferred approaches were unpicked based on the interviews with the stakeholders for enhancing social capital.

- *Building Positive Networks and Relationships –*

The degree to which an individual is integrated into a group and can cultivate positive social support networks has been shown to have a significant impact on outcomes (3). A sense of belonging to 'the group' was seen as important by the stakeholders. They reported that the group dynamic within meetings and social interactions were important for sustained meaningful engagement with NCoF. This was described as critical for ensuring that even seemingly mundane tasks like replying to e-mails or having marketing materials signed-off for example were done in a timely manner. These networks and relationships were reported as being fundamental to maintain momentum and a critical mass of people with the social capital to influence change.

Social relationships and social norms have a substantial and persistent influence on how people behave (4). Social learning theory explains how social norms and social influence affect individual behaviour. The stronger ones affiliation to the group the more responsive an individual will be to the normative expectations of that group. Stakeholders who presented as being the most engaged (socially included) also reported the fewest barriers towards maintain behaviours that were deemed essential to see NCoF succeed.

3.vi – STRUCTURAL LEVEL 1 – Designing Rewards & Creating Accountability:

This area recorded the lowest score based on the survey administered during the interview. Scoring only 6.55/10, it was apparent from the interviews that the system could be improved around designing rewards and demanding accountability. When successful, this strategy often incorporates goal setting and self-monitoring (5). However it is important that any goals or expectations are realistic and achievable. As much as accomplishing a goal or target can be a positive experience, failure to do so can be counterproductive. Any negative experiences this may produce can be so detrimental that it undermines any subsequent interest in NCoF.

Preferred Approaches:

The following preferred approaches were unpicked based on the interviews with the stakeholders for designing rewards and accountability.

- *Rewarding Vital Behaviours –*

Central to this idea were accounts from stakeholders that focused on doing something well which brought with it a range of positive feelings or a sense of satisfaction. Stakeholders highlighted the intrinsic rewards gained form seeing NCoF suceed from strategic and delivery perspectives. Conversely, where targets were not accomplished or goals were not achieved, these positive feelings could be replaced by a sense of failure or underachievement. An environment that rewards stakeholders by developing an extrinsic reward system that is immediate, gratifying, and clearly tied to vital behaviours may be advantageous. Effective reward systems have to move beyond stakeholders simply feeling positive about doing a good job as this only tends to last as long as a persons good will. Once this was exhausted, stakeholders alluded to the percieved prefered approaches decreasing in frequency and quality.

- *Creating Accountability –*

The view from the stakeholders was that rather than being undesirable, accountability would be welcomed and positive. While they felt a sense of personal accountability, in general, accountability was not necessarily built in to the culture of the programme. They suggested that it was important to set the expectations for NCoF from the outset, invite commitment from stakeholders, measure progress, provide feedback and link progress to consequences.

3.vi – STRUCTURAL LEVEL 2 - Changing The Environment

Based on the survey data, participants reported an average score of 6.85/10 in this area. This was the second lowest recorded score suggesting that more work was required to make the offer visible and accessible to its intended target audience. While environmental change in its traditional sense is beyond the scope of NCoF, the ability of the system to promote the preferred approached required for NCoF to succeed could be improved. It was suggested that, NCoF continue advocating for co-ordinated action across a broad range of disciplines and stakeholders, including partners outside traditional sectors. Moreover, work across all levels of governance was thought to be important so that approaches were reinforced and sustained.

Preferred Approaches:

The following strategies were unpicked based on the interviews with the stakeholders for influencing change within the system.

- *Making it Easy –*

Stakeholders reported that even when they and participants were strongly motivated to adopt a new behaviour, it could still be difficult if the system wasn't set up to make the behaviour easy. It was not enough to have a goal for a behaviour, NCoF also needed to provide practical ways to reach it. This notion was further linked to the clarity of the message and telling compelling stories which in turn was linked to maintaining project momentum. The interviews confirmed that the least effective strategies were those that aroused fear or regret in the person attempting to make a change.

- *Making it Unavoidable –*

This stratergy was all about increasing exposure to the programme. For example, there was a feeling that fewer, bigger, well timed events were more beneficial than a host of smaller events. Although the initial exposure of NCoF was sucesfull, the program became avoidable over the following months while the formal delivery was being developed, at which point the programme became very much avoidable. Moreover, some of the partners reported that they felt isolated from the main programme and that there would have been benefit in doing more to link the programmes together.

References:

1. Moore GF, Audrey S, Barker M, Bond L, Bonell C, Hardeman W, et al. Process evaluation of complex interventions: Medical Research Council guidance. BMJ (Clinical research ed). 2015;350:h1258.
2. Steckler A, Linnan L. Process evaluation for Public Health interventions and research: Jossey-Bass; 2014.
3. Naidoo J, Wills J. Health Promotion – Foundations for Practice. Second Edition ed. London: Bailliere Tindall; 2005.
4. Jackson C. Behavioral science theory and principles for practice in health education. Health Education Research,. 1997;12(1):143-50.
5. Conn V, Hafdahl A, Mehr D. Interventions to increase physical activity among healthy adults: Meta-analysis of outcomes. Am J Public Health. 2011;101(4):751-8.